

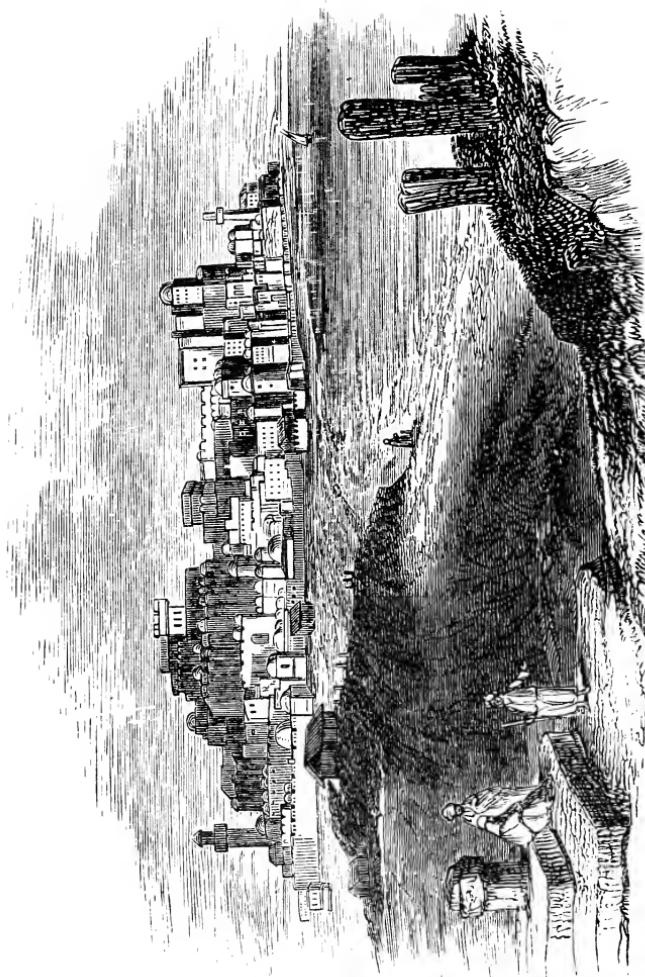
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Frontispiece. See page 8.

THE CITY OF JAFFA.

LOST AND FOUND.

BY

REV. W. S. URMY.

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PREFACE.

No Parables of the New Testament are more instructive or more touching than those spoken by our Lord respecting the lost piece of silver, the lost sheep on the mountains, and the prodigal son. They are at once picturesque and pertinent; and it is upon these incidents, which may have been real ones, of Eastern life and manners, that the following pages are written. Lessons thus conveyed, where truths are taught in fable, and principles for life's conduct are put into the form of a story, are more apt to be fixed on the memory. It

was our Savior's favorite method of teaching, and it was used to good purpose by Nathan in his reproof of David.

This volume is designed for the young. They have many enticements to sin, and unless they become well settled in the principles of virtue in childhood, they are apt speedily to go astray, and to lose the best part of their lives, besides being in continual danger of losing their own souls. But how that which has been lost through accident, misfortune, or willfulness may be regained, the parables of our Lord, here retold, will show. By sin we are all lost; by God's grace we may all be recovered. That we may all use that grace and be the subjects of that recovery is the earnest prayer of

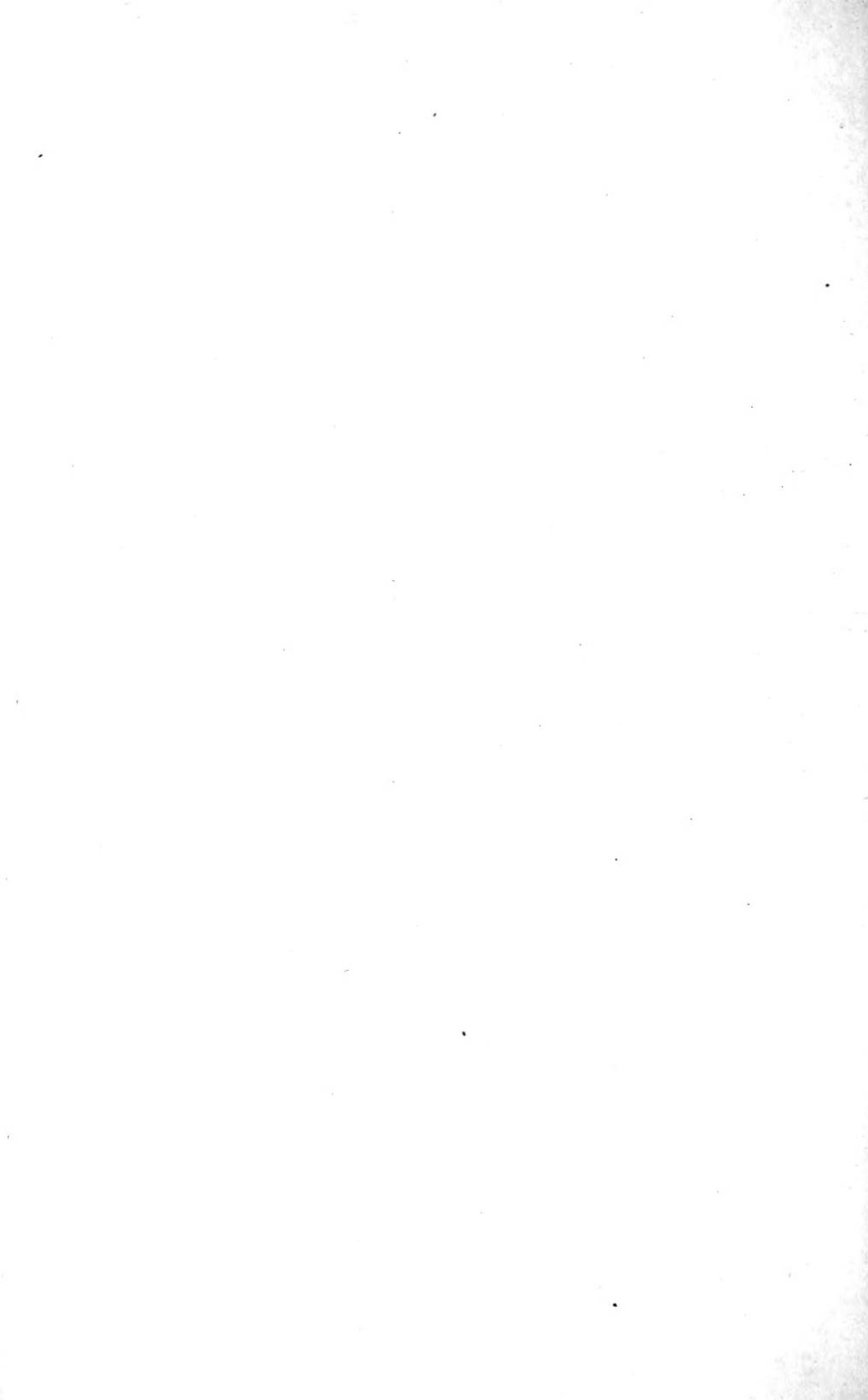
THE AUTHOR.

VALLEJO, CAL., June, 1875.

PART I.

THE LOST COIN.

FOUND.



THE LOST COIN.

CHAPTER I.

LET us go to a far-off country. We sail for several days across the Atlantic Ocean, with its deep, dark waters, its varying weather, and its ever restless waves. Day after day passes wearily until, at last, land is espied, and we draw near a coast. We see an opening, and sail through a strait passing between two points of land which used to be called "The Pillars of Hercules," and enter a beautiful blue sea which lies underneath a most delightful sky, and which was named "The Sea in Midst of the Earth." Sailing the whole

length of this sea, we approach another coast, and prepare to land.

There is a town before us, situated on quite a high hill, the soil about being quite sandy. The hill is so steep that the houses of the town look as though they were built on the top of one another, and the people have to go from one street to a higher one by means of stairs.

This place is called Jaffa; but in olden times its name was Joppa. It is said to be a very old town—some historians saying that it existed before the Flood, and that it took its name from Japhet, the third son of Noah. But these are probably merely fables, yet they show that the town is very ancient. And, indeed, we know that it is as old as the time of the Exodus; for it was one of the towns mentioned by Joshua when he invaded Canaan, and took posses-

sion of it in the name of the Lord. Here it was that the timber for the Temple of Solomon was brought in floats, or rafts, and landed, to be taken to Jerusalem. Here, also, Jonah went, when he ran away from the Lord because he did not wish to go and preach to the Ninevites, a wicked people whom God threatened to destroy. Jonah found here a ship going down to Tarshish, and, going aboard, thought himself safe; but was thrown overboard, and swallowed by a great fish, perhaps a whale, as whales were then probably in this sea in great numbers; but it may have been another kind of fish, made by the Lord just at that time for this purpose. Here it was that Peter, the apostle, raised Tabitha from the dead, while the poor women who had received so much kindness from her stood about, showing the coats and

garments she had made for them. Here, also, Peter dwelt with Simon, a tanner, and had the vision of the great sheet, or cloth, let down from heaven full of all kinds of beasts and reptiles, which he was invited to eat, to show him that all men were loved of God, and ought to have the Gospel preached to them. This town was destroyed a number of times in the wars which raged at different periods in that country, but was rebuilt as often.

But now we must land; and we shall find it difficult, for there is no wharf here, and we must go ashore in small boats. The port is open, and the large waves roll in with great force, so that sometimes the boats are overturned and all in them are drowned. But we pass safely, and soon land on the shore, with only a little dampness on our clothing. We proceed

through the town, and on the other side of it there are orchards and flower-gardens stretching away off for miles.

As we journey on, we will try to think that we live in the times of the Savior, and that the roads and the houses and the trees and the people are all as they were when Jesus walked the earth, and saw with his sad eyes the country which he loved so much, but which he knew would soon be so desolate and barren.

Here is a town, and through the narrow gate in the wall there are coming several people. We watch them with interest, and take notice that they are dressed in a very singular manner. Here is a woman. She is going the other way, and is dressed in coarse but clean clothing. She has a large, square shawl thrown over her shoulders, and the end of it drawn across

her face, so that no one can see who she is.

It is a strange house in which the woman lives. It stands on a back street in the town before us; and, as you come close to it, you see that there are no windows looking out on the street, but there is just a high, blank, white wall, with a door in the center. Should you open this door and look in, you would see nothing, as the passage-way turns square to the right, so that no one passing along the street, which is very narrow, may be able to look at the people who live here. As you go on through this narrow passage-way, you come to a pretty little square court. There are two beautiful palm-trees growing in this court, and in their branches some softly cooing, half-wild doves have made their nests, and are flying hither and thither,

their wings glistening like silver in the bright sunshine. Between the trees there is a small flower-garden, with a few rose-bushes and lilies, and among them fragrant herbs which give forth a pleasant smell. Right by the side of the garden is a deep well, from which water is drawn by a long line tied to a skin bucket; and the woman sometimes draws the water and scatters it in brilliant drops all over the trembling roses and plants.

As we stand in the court, we find that the doors of the house all open into it, as well as the windows, which have no panes of glass in them, but are latticed; and when it is cold weather a curtain is let down on the inside. Right opposite the entrance from the street there is what is called the reception-room; but it is very poorly furnished; as is the rest of the

house—showing that the people who now live here are very poor. There is a sort of raised platform running around the room, next to the wall, and on this are spread a few mats, with one or two coarse-looking pillows, and in one corner the dressed skin of some wild animal which has been killed not far away from the house. If we ascend a small staircase just to the right of the main entrance, we gain the roof of the house, which we find to be nearly flat. It is made by laying down rafters some three feet apart, and then placing across them small sticks. On these sticks has been placed a quantity of a certain thorn-bush, and then a coat of mortar over that. On the top of the mortar earth has been laid, which is rolled smooth by a wooden roller, which is kept on the roof, and used after every rain. This house is

in a country where rain falls only for a part of the year, say from the first of October to the first of April, with fair spells between, or this roof would not answer to protect the people who live here. But in this climate it does answer very well; and then, being flat, it is good for other purposes also. In this country the weather is often very warm, and the people who live in the house find it is very pleasant to come on the roof, where they make a sort of booth or arbor; and thus, shaded from the sun, enjoy whatever breeze is blowing, as they could not by remaining in the rooms or court below. So, at night, there being very little, if any, dew, it is found to be a pleasant place to sleep; and, whenever there is any thing going on in the town, it is a good place to take a look at those who are passing in the street.

CHAPTER II.

LET us go down stairs, and see what the woman is doing. She is seated on one of the cushions in the reception-room, spinning wool with a strange sort of spinning-wheel, quite different from those which our grandmothers used to make such a grand humming with, yet good enough to produce a very good quality of yarn. At the woman's side there is sweetly sleeping a pretty babe, with long, soft, black eyelashes, and a transparent, brownish complexion, which contrasts strongly with the coarse but clean snow-white linen in which its body is slightly wrapped. The mother looks at it with fond admiration, and, as it

moves its little fat arms, sings a low, soft lullaby, to soothe it to deeper rest. Then she spins on with a swifter motion; for what she is spinning is to make her lovely child a garment that shall protect it from the Winter's cold, which will soon chill the air and send the leaves of the trees sailing down to the hard earth. Now the wheel stops its humming; for the woman is in deep thought. Her eyes are fixed on vacancy, and she does not heed the babe, who seems just about to wake up. What can the woman be thinking about? She is a Jewish woman, and this country where she lives is called Palestine; she is thinking about one of the great yearly feasts of her people, and how pleasant it will be to go up to the city of the Great King, where the Temple is, and there, with her babe in her arms, rejoice before the Lord. There

were three of these feasts, all held in the dry season, when the traveling was good. The first festival—that of Unleavened Bread, called also the Passover—took place in the Spring, the month Nisan corresponding to our month April; the Feast of Pentecost, or of weeks, occurred just seven weeks after that of Unleavened Bread, on the fiftieth day, Pentecost meaning fiftieth. The last feast was the Feast of In-gathering, or of Tabernacles, in the month Tishri, or about our month October.

It was to this last-mentioned feast that the woman thought of going, and she had been saving her money for the purpose of paying her expenses, and for buying an offering when she arrived at Jerusalem. She had labored hard and long to get the necessary amount of money, and she had told all her neighbors how glad she was

that she could once more go to the feast. They seemed very much pleased, and conversed much about the journey, and what troubles they should meet with on the road, and how greatly pleased they would all at last be to see the beautiful Temple in all its splendor on Mount Moriah.

While the woman was thus thinking about the feast the babe awakened, opening its eyes, and uttering a soft, winning call for its mother, which recalled her thoughts to what she had been doing; and so, setting up the babe with a pillow behind it, she was about to commence her spinning again, when the thought struck her that she had better take a look at her purse and see if her money was all right.

This purse was made of leather, and pretty well worn. As the woman opens the purse and pours out the money, we see

that it consists of silver coins about as large as our dimes, though perhaps a little thicker. Some of them have on one side a three-legged stool, or tripod, such as those on which the spiritual mediums used to sit when they uttered their sayings which were called oracles; others have on one side the head of the heathen god Vulcan, who was supposed to have been made lame by being thrown out of heaven, and was thought to have his forge, as a blacksmith, in the volcano Vesuvius. On the other side of the piece of money are two lighted torches. The coins were made in Greece, and were called *drachmas*, or, in English, *drams*—spelled sometimes thus, *drachms*. They were each worth about seventeen of our cents; but things were cheaper in this woman's day, and they would buy much more than seventeen

cents would in our day; that is, about ten times as much. So that when we read in the parable about the laborers in the vineyard, that they agreed to work for a penny a day, we are not to suppose that they only received the same as though they had been paid one of our copper or nickel cents, or even what was equal to an English penny, which is worth nearly twice as much as ours, but that their wages amounted to something like one dollar and seventy cents, or, at least, a dollar and a half; and this was quite good pay. So, two pennies, which the good Samaritan gave the inn-keeper for the board of the poor man who was beaten by thieves, was equal to nearly three dollars and a half, and was sufficient to keep him over two weeks at a country inn, where living was cheap.

But we must return to our unfortunate

woman, from whom we have wandered far away. She has just poured out the coins, and is counting them. As she comes to the last one a shadow seems to fall over her face; for she finds there are only *nine*, when there should be *ten*. She counts them again, and still she finds there are only nine. Surely, one must be lost! And now she remembers that one day when the babe was quite fretful, and nothing seemed to amuse it, that she let it have the purse and the pieces of silver to play with, and that this was in the kitchen, one of the darkest rooms in the house. She is just going to the kitchen to seek for it, when there is a knock at the front door, and, on opening it, she finds a neighbor there, who has come to bring her a present of some nice, new butter, which she has just churned in the skin of a goat;

for the people in that day knew nothing of the kind of churns which we now use, but would put the milk in a skin bottle, and swing and wring it till the butter came; and this is why the churning of milk could be mentioned as much like the wringing of the nose which “bringeth forth blood.” (Proverbs xxx, 33.)

The woman tells this kind neighbor about her loss, and says she is afraid she can not find the piece which is lost, and that will prevent her from going to the feast. This makes the neighbor feel sad, and she tells quite a number of the woman’s friends about it, who also feel sad, and come one after another to inquire if she has yet found the coin. But the woman tells them she has not, and they help her; but all in vain. As it is getting to be dark, the neighbors all leave, one after

another; and the woman is sitting alone and crying because she has met with so great a misfortune; for she is very poor, and it will take a long time for her to save another piece like it.

As she thus sits, mourning her loss, the thought strikes her that she had better light a lamp and sweep the house. In one of the rooms there is a lamp-stand, two or three feet high, and on it a lamp made of brass, of a very strange shape, being in form like a man's foot. The top is open, and in the place where the big-toe should be there is a place for the wick. This wick is made of fibers of flax, twisted slightly; and the oil is that which is made from olives, and which we call sweet-oil. A very pure, fine kind of this oil was burned in the Temple, and the lamps in which it was burned were placed on the

golden candlestick — or, rather, golden lamp-stand ; and these lamps were also probably made of gold, though no mention is made of their material in the Bible.

CHAPTER III.

WE can not tell how the woman made a blaze, so as to light the lamp. Perhaps she used a flint and steel to light some tinder, and then the tinder-spark to light a match dipped in brimstone; or she may have rubbed two dry sticks together; or she may have kept a light burning all the time, as they did in the Temple, where the fire first kindled by the Lord was never suffered to go out. At any rate, she lit the lamp, and taking it by the handle, which was at the side, she took her broom, and, going into the kitchen, she commenced to sweep and look.

Just as she had fairly begun to search

for the piece, another neighbor came in, and began to talk to her about the foolishness of going to so much trouble for the sake of one little piece of money.

“It is n’t of much value,” said the neighbor; “and, besides, why do n’t you think of the pieces you have in your purse?”

“I do think of them somewhat,” said the woman; “but their being safe in the purse causes me to think of the one which is lost, and wish it were there also.”

“But that is only *one*,” replied the neighbor, “and these are *nine* in number; so you should think of these nine times more than of the one that is lost.”

“Perhaps I should do so,” said the woman, “but I can not; and, so far from this, I believe I think a hundred times more of the one which is lost than I do of all the other pieces.”

“Well, you are a very singular woman,” said the other, as she went away; “but I wish you may find the piece.”

“I think you would act and feel just the same,” said she, as she bade her good-night, “if you were in my place.”

So we see her sweeping, sweeping, sweeping, peering here and there into the dark corners and among the dust and litter, till she is so tired that she can hardly stand.

To add to her discomfort, the babe begins to cry, and will not be stopped by all the words which its mother utters.

Still she sweeps, and looks, and stoops, and rises, and, just as she thinks it is of no use, there it shines before her; and O, with what joy does she pick it up, brush off the dust, and place it among its companions, safe at last in the leather purse!

But she is not content to have her joy all to herself, so she runs joyously up to the house-top, and calls to her friends and neighbors to come and rejoice with her. Soon the news spreads around, and they come running in to see the piece and express their great gladness that at last the piece is found; and to see the woman so glad increases their joy, and for a long time they talk and laugh and rejoice together.

The same neighbor who found fault with the woman for looking after the coin wants to know why they do not rejoice about the pieces which were never lost. They say they do not know, only they can not feel like rejoicing over them. They have always been safe; but this was once lost, and is now found.

The woman is thought to represent the

Church of Christ, into whose care the whole human race has been committed. So, all that are in their sins may be said to be lost, and in danger of perishing. It is the duty of the Church, therefore, to seek for the poor and distressed sinner, wherever he is, and lead him to a place of safety and comfort.

Some of these poor lost ones are in low, out-of-the-way places, where it is very unpleasant to go; and yet they should not for this reason be left to themselves, and to grow worse and worse, until, at last, they perish forever. Their being in such places is the greater reason why we should use every means in our power to rescue them, as these very surroundings tend to make them worse.

The candle, or lamp, may represent the Word of God, the blessed Bible, which is

as "a light to our way and a lamp unto our path," and through its teachings we come to a knowledge of our own condition out of Christ, and also the condition of others about us.

By the broom may be represented the various means which may be and are made use of in helping the sinful from the ways of unrighteousness. The Sunday-school is such a broom, and many of our young readers even may use this means of bringing some lost one to God and heaven. Go out into the highways and by-ways, and invite all the children, and even grown people, to come to your Sunday-school, where they will hear of Jesus, and find the way of salvation.

The tract is another broom which may be used with good effect to sweep rough wanderers into the light and power of

Gospel truth and enjoyment. Every little boy and girl may distribute tracts. They are not heavy, and it is quite likely that some people who are not followers of the Lord may be willing to take a tract from a little child or a large one, who would not receive it from a man or woman.

Sometimes you will have to sweep lightly or gently, as a harsh manner might drive them away, when a courteous, loving course would win them to the Savior, and give them a correct idea of the influence of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which is so full of all right and pleasant thought and feeling.

How encouraging to the lost to know that there are those who are seeking them, from love to their souls! Despair not, O sinner! but believe that many desire your return to the bosom of the Church of God.

And when you are addressed by one who is thus seeking you, turn not the cold shoulder, but allow yourself to be persuaded of the willingness and ability of Jesus to save you. Accept the offers of salvation, and then shall there be great rejoicing in the Church below and in heaven above.

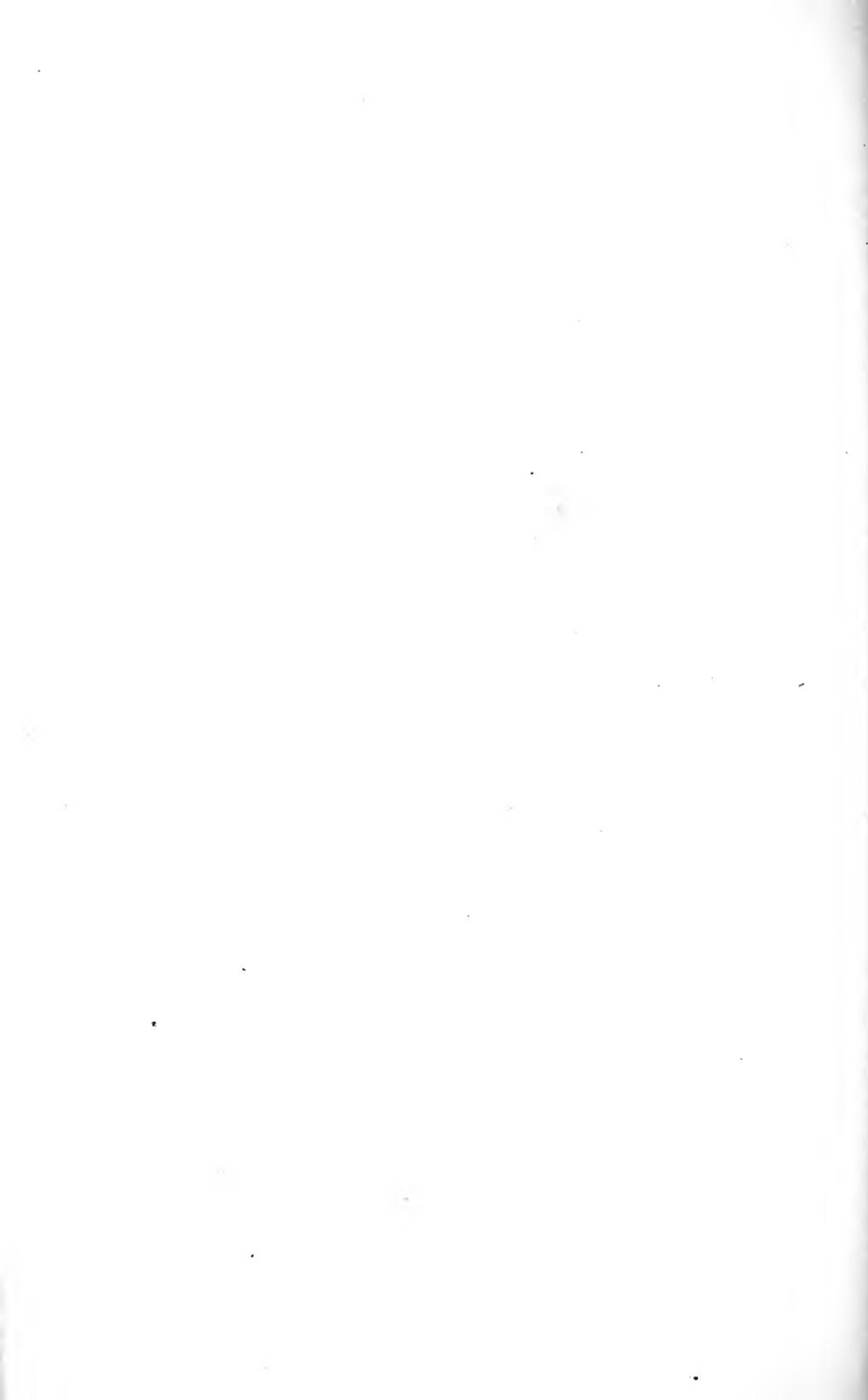
Let us never be ashamed to rejoice when the lost has been found and brought back again. We only do what the angels do when we shout for joy as the lost one is recovered to home and friends, to the joys and blessings of the Church of Christ. No matter how poor they are; no matter how soiled they are; no matter how unlearned they are; no matter how sinful they may have been,—let songs of great rejoicing and shouts of great gladness fill all the air when the weary, sad,

and helpless wanderers come to the arms of their great mother, the Church, and dwell secure under her affectionate protection.

PART II.

THE LOST SHEEP.

FOUND.



THE LOST SHEEP.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT a wonderful night was that when the shepherds, watching their flocks, heard the song of the angels! They were probably on a plain to the east of Bethlehem. This village, which is now quite a large one, was then, it is thought, a small hamlet. It is about six miles south of Jerusalem, and was often called Bethlehem-Judah, because there was another Bethlehem in the part of Palestine where the tribe of Zebulon was located. The shepherds were watching their flocks to protect

them from the wild beasts, which were quite numerous in those parts; and, while the flocks were quietly and securely resting, the shepherds may have been passing away the time in telling stories to one another; for this was a very favorite occupation with the people who lived in what is called the Orient, or the Eastern World. While thus watching, an angel descended right in their midst, and made them greatly afraid; but he told them not to fear—and when he had given them his message, suddenly there was with him, just as though they had been made right there, a whole company of other angels, who sang that wonderful song: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!” Then the shepherds went to Bethlehem, and found Jesus, just as the angel told them they would, and they were

very glad, though they were very much surprised.

Now, let us suppose that one of these shepherds had a son, and that he was a shepherd too. And this would not be strange; for it was a very common thing for the Jews to bring up their sons to the same trade or occupation that they themselves followed. And whether they did this or not, all the boys must learn some trade; and so the greatest men among them had their trades—while, so far from being ashamed to have it known that they had learned a trade, they called themselves after it, as, Jonathan, the potter. So, you recollect that though Paul was a very learned man, and a very proud man, too, about his religion, before he was converted, yet he had learned a trade; and when he was a Christian minister, he

wrought at it, with Aquila and Priscilla. He was a tent-maker.

We say, suppose this shepherd's boy was also a shepherd, and that he grew up to be a man, and had his own flock. Let us call his name Obed, and consider that this flock of his numbers just one hundred. He thinks a great deal of his sheep, and knows every one of them. Not only so, but he has a name for every one, and when he calls one by his name that sheep knows it, and runs to him. There is something very singular about this man and his sheep. He has spoken to them so often, and called them so frequently by their names, that they have grown familiar with his voice, and will listen whenever he speaks; but if any one else speaks, no matter how kindly, or how often he calls their names, they will not listen to him,

but act just as if they did not know he was speaking. Not only so, but if he calls them any wise loudly or harshly, they will run from him, instead of coming nearer to him. How pleased the shepherd must be to have sheep that will mind him, and only him, so well, and appear to love him so dearly!

I have seen lately in a paper an incident which will illustrate what I am telling you:

“Not long since, a man in India was accused of stealing a sheep. He was brought before the judge, and the supposed owner of the sheep was also present. Both claimed the sheep, and had witnesses to prove their claims, so that it was not easy for the judge to decide to whom the sheep belonged. Knowing the custom of the shepherds and the habits of the sheep, the judge ordered the sheep to be brought

into court, and sent one of the men into another room, while he told the other to *call* the sheep and see if it would come to him. But the poor animal, not knowing the ‘voice of the stranger,’ would not go to him. In the mean time the other man, who was in an adjoining room, growing impatient, and probably suspecting what was going on, gave a kind of ‘cluck,’ upon which the sheep bounded away toward him at once.”

This shepherd loves his sheep very much, and will cheerfully undergo any suffering and brave any peril to rescue them from danger and death. He is as brave as his great ancestor, David. You have read in your Bibles, perhaps, how this celebrated king, in order to prove his ability to meet Goliath, related to Saul what happened to him once when he was

keeping his father's sheep, and a lion and a bear came and took away a lamb; how he ran after them, and when the lion stood up on its hind-feet, to strike him with his paws, he smote him with some sharp weapon, and slew him, and delivered the lamb out of his mouth. He then slew also the bear, which was probably waiting near to get his share of the poor lamb.

If this shepherd were only a hired man he could not have so great love for the sheep as he now has, they being his own; and if the wolf should come, or the more ferocious and stronger beasts which David killed should approach, he would fly from them and seek his own safety, rather than remain and endeavor to rescue them. So the sheep might well rejoice, if they could understand it, that they are under the care of one who owns them.

Obed also loves his sheep so well that he would go to great pains, and endure great privations, to find one of them if it were lost. And now I am going to tell you how one of the sheep became lost, and how Obed found it.

CHAPTER II.

It was a bright, beautiful day in Palestine. The sky was so blue it was almost black, and the cool west wind played cheerily among the dark-green boughs of the olive-trees, and bent gracefully the long branches of the oleanders, so full of sweet crimson blossoms.

Far out in an uninhabited part of the country, which is called a wilderness, because it is made up of wild, uncultivated land, we see a flock of sheep; and on a little hill near by a shepherd is reclining, who every once in a while raises himself and looks about, that he may see whether any of the sheep are straying, or if any

wild beast is approaching. It is Obed, with his flock of a hundred, and they both seem to be enjoying the delightful day.

Hour after hour passes, until the shadows begin to grow long in the declining sun, and Obed begins to think it is time to gather his flock closer together, for greater security during the night; and he begins to call the sheep with a cry which they all seem to understand as they run toward him. Then he begins to count them, in order that he may be sure they are all present. He counts on until he comes to the number ninety-nine, when he finds that this takes the last sheep. Thinking he may have made a mistake, he counts them over again, and then the third time, but with the same result—when he discovers, much to his dismay, that one of his sheep is missing. What shall he do?

The night is close at hand; it will soon be very dark—for the twilight does not last long in this part of the world—and the poor sheep will be exposed to the perils of the darkness and the attacks of wild beasts. He thinks of the flock which is standing about him, and what may happen to them should he leave them; but his heart yearns still more after the little lost one, wandering, he knows not where, amid the rocks and brambles, bleating, perhaps, for its companions—so he resolves to leave the flock and go after the one that is lost. He takes a hasty look of fondness at the sheep he is leaving, and then plunges down into a narrow ravine in the direction which he supposes the lost sheep has gone.

On and on he strides, more and more alarmed for its safety the farther he gets from the flock. Now he stops and listens;

but he can hear nothing from it, and he resumes his search, looking here and there in every cranny and crook and crevice, if he may but see only its bones; yet he gets no clew to its whereabouts. It is now getting somewhat dark, and as Obed steps on a sharp stone it pierces the sandal which he wears and cuts his foot; this causes him to lose his balance, and he falls heavily to the earth, striking his side against a rough rock and breaking one of his ribs. He gets up bleeding and sore, and at first thinks he might as well go back and let the lost sheep go; but he thinks again of its peril, and he feels that he *must* seek and save it. So on he plods, weary and faint; and then he stops and listens. No sound. All is still; but just as he starts to walk, a black form creeps from the bushes near the path, and, quickly



THE LOST SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS.

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gliding across Obed's track, he perceives that it is a gaunt wolf, with shaggy hair and glistening eyes. Its white teeth show plainly as it snarls at Obed, and then gallops off to seek its prey. This sight makes Obed more and more fearful for his sheep, and he steps more quickly, though in great pain, calling and looking till he is almost in complete despair of ever finding the straying one.

He thinks he will give up the search for the night, and resume it again in the morning, after he has gone a little further. He goes a short distance, and listens. He believes he hears a faint bleat in the distance. He goes forward a little, and listens again, when he is assured that it is the bleat of his sheep which is lost. How his heart bounds with delight! He forgets his pain and his weariness, and runs on in

the direction of the bleating; but, as he nears the place where he supposes the sheep is, he finds that he has company in his search—for not far from him he perceives the form of the wolf again, and sees that he too is hastening toward the same place. He must hasten, or the wolf will outrun him, and seize the sheep and suck his blood. He musters up all his strength and makes one final effort. Just as he gets within sight of the sheep, the wolf outruns him a few steps and leaps on the wanderer; but he has not time to close his savage jaws in its flesh before the sharp knife of Obed glances in the air and descends like lightning into the neck of the wolf. The beast then turns on Obed, and, leaping at him, buries his sharp teeth in the shepherd's arm. Obed stumbles and falls, and over and over the two roll

together, till, at last, a well-directed blow of the sharp knife strikes the heart of the wolf, and he gives one deep, long yell as he turns on his side and dies.

The sheep is then carefully taken up and lifted to the shoulders of the stout shepherd, who turns his steps toward the place where he has left his flock. Much shorter seems the distance, now that he has recovered the lost one. How light is his heart, and how easy his burden, as he pushes through the gathering darkness! He talks to the sheep, and chides it in a playful manner for its wrong-doing in wandering off from a place of safety. He tells it to be careful not to go off again, lest he should allow it to wander on till it should perish. He reminds it how kind he has been to it in leading it beside the still waters and into green pastures, and

that, now he has restored it to the place of safety, it must not wander again.

Now the flock is in sight, and the sheep is let down from the shoulders and placed with the others. It seems very glad to get back to its fellows, huddles up to a small group of the flock, and is soon forgetting its troubles in a refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER III.

THERE is a beautiful story told by the Rev. Newman Hall of how a sheep was lost and found in England, which you may like to read :

“ Wandering, as I have often done, knapsack on back and staff in hand, over the mountains of the English Lake District, I reached my old friend’s, Ritson of Westdale, just as tidings were brought of a sheep that had wandered among the precipices and was in peril. A party set off at once to rescue it. I joined them, and thus was witness of a scene which I looked at as a parable acting before my

eyes, and in every particular illustrating Gospel truth.

“The sheep was a long way off, and yet was noticed. It was but a tiny object, a mere speck upon the rocks; still, the careful eye of the shepherd detected it. It was but one of a large flock, yet it was valued. It had wandered off in search of herbage, and, descending without difficulty the face of a mountain cliff, had reached a ledge in the rocks. It could go no farther, neither could it return by the way by which it had descended. And now there was nothing for it to eat, and the poor sheep must have perished had not the shepherd come to find it.

“No time was to be lost. One of the shepherds fastened a strong rope round his body, and the other two men lowered him down over the top of the rock. There was

some risk of limb or life; but he was willing to encounter it for the sake of the sheep. My brother and myself found a way to clamber to the bottom of the rocks, whence we watched the shepherd being lowered down till he came near to where the sheep was standing. But as he could not reach it with his hand, he stretched out the long pole and tried to place the noose round the sheep's neck. I watched with interest the patience and perseverance of the shepherd. For two whole hours, hanging over the precipice, he labored to save the sheep.

“But the sheep seemed resolved not to be saved. Just as the noose was about to fall over its head, the sheep twisted suddenly round to avoid it. Then the shepherd had again to arrange and prepare his line. Poor sheep! you do not know how

good that shepherd is, and how he wants to save you. You think he has come to do you harm. You are frightened at your helper. You dislike the noose that has been prepared to rescue you. You do not see that such captivity will be freedom; that such a bondage will be safety! Thus for two hours the sheep continued to elude the shepherd's efforts. Moreover, in its fright it was in danger of throwing itself over the precipice. To prevent this, we shouted and threw stones. The sheep was frightened by these noises, which it no doubt regarded as coming from enemies, but which were merciful warnings and terrors kindly meant.

“At length the noose was cast over the head of the sheep. The poor wanderer struggled hard; but the shepherd drew it forward, in spite of all resistance. The

cord was tight round its neck, and no doubt gave it pain; but it was needful pain, pain only in the process of rescue, pain only till the sheep was brought quite close to the shepherd. Then he loosened the cord as he held the sheep carefully in his arms. But there was more to be done yet. The shepherd asked us to act as helpers and under-shepherds to him; for, as it would be easier and better to lower the sheep to the bottom among the safe pastures than to raise it to the top among the rocks, he tied the legs of the sheep together, and, fastening the rope to them, lowered it down to us. Then we unfastened the string that bound its legs, and set it at liberty. We did not save it, but, as under-shepherds, we helped in the good work.

“O, how glad the sheep was when it

found it was safe and free! How it jumped and skipped and frisked along the turf! Then how eagerly it began to browse the safe pastures! for it had been long without food.

“And how glad was the shepherd when he saw the sheep safe, and when he ascended again to the top of the rocks and rejoined his companions! And with what delight they went back to the farm and said, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the sheep that was lost!’”

CHAPTER IV.

AND now I need not tell you that I have written what I have in order to lead you to think of Him who is the Great Shepherd of the sheep, and who could truly say of himself, "I am the good shepherd." The Lord Jesus dearly loves all those who put themselves under his care, and will not suffer them to be lost, or want for any thing necessary to their spiritual comfort, so long as they put their trust in him and remain his sheep. He knows all his followers by name. The names by which Jesus knows us may not be the same as those by which we are known on earth; but be assured they are

beautiful ones, and greatly adorn that wonderful book of which we read in the Bible. It is called the book of life, and contains the names of those whom Christ intends shall live with him in the bright abodes of the blessed, where is no sighing nor pain nor night nor death, because the former things are done away. Yet we read that Christ says of a certain kind of man, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." (Revelation iii, 5.) And again, in the last chapter of the Bible, nineteenth verse, it reads, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." So we see it is possible, even after we have had our names written in the Lamb's book of life,

to have our names blotted out, and never be called by the Savior to the enjoyment of the inheritance he is reserving in heaven for those whom he loves, and who remain faithful through all their afflictions, temptations, and trials here in this world.

That is, if we are careful to maintain good works Jesus will remember our names, and bring us to dwell with him forever; but if we do wrong, even though we may have been converted, it will be the same as though Jesus should forget our names and all about us, and refuse to admit us to the presence of bright angels and all those who overcome through the blood of the Lamb.

This gracious Savior of ours was indeed the Good Shepherd, for he gave his life for the sheep. He came all the way from his Father's bright abode to this dark and

ruined world, that he might here seek and save them that were lost. In the dreadful combat with the prince of this world, the devil, and Satan, the great greedy wolf that seeks to destroy us, Christ gave up his life indeed, and thus secured our salvation; but he did not remain dead. No! The third day he rose and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and the living, and, triumphing over death, as well as him who had the power of death, he has for evermore freed those who trust in him from the bondage of sin and death.

Let us never leave our shepherd's side in order to stray into the bleak and dreary wilderness of sin, or into the more alluring fields of worldly pleasure. It may be he will seek us, even though we may wander; but it is quite possible that we shall be

unwilling to follow him back to the safe path or the secure fold, and then, still refusing all his calls, be seized at last by the cruel wolf, and dragged to his dreadful den, there to suffer and mourn forever.

Let this be your prayer :

“Leave me not now, while still the shade is creeping
O'er the sad heart that longs to rest in thee.

Hear my complaint, and, while my soul is weeping,
Breathe thou the holy dew of sympathy.

Leave me not now, thou Savior of compassion,
While yet the busy tempter lurketh near;
Lord, by thine anguish and thy wondrous passion,
Do I entreat thee now to linger near.

Jesus, thou soul of love, thou heart of feeling,
Let me repose the weary night away,
Safe on thy bosom, all my woes revealing,
Secure from danger, till the dawn of day.

Then leave me not, O Comforter and Father;
Parent of love, I live but in thy sight;
Good Shepherd, to thy fold the wand'rer gather,
There to adore thee, morning, noon, and night.”

PART III.

THE LOST SON.

FOUND.



THE LOST SON.

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG man is standing before an elderly one, who appears to be his father. The young man is arrayed in a sort of shirt, or tunic, which reaches his ankles, made of linen, and over this he has a rich, square blanket, or shawl, called an *abba*, or *burnoose*. He has drawn one corner over his left shoulder, then brought it around under his right arm, and then thrown the other end over his left shoulder—thus leaving his right arm free. Around his waist he has an embroidered scarf tied, and on his feet sandals—pieces

of leather cut in the shape of the bottom of the foot, and bound fast to the foot by leather thongs, or strings. These sandals are meant when the Bible speaks of shoes, and by a “shoe-latchet” is meant a sandal-thong.

The elderly man is dressed in about the same style, only his raiment is richer; and on his finger is a signet-ring, with which the wax used to seal a letter is impressed. He has also on his head a turban, made of a long piece of narrow linen cloth.

Who are these two men? All we know is that they are father and son, and that the son has come to make a request of his father in regard to the property which his father holds, and which he intends to divide between this young man and his brother.

The young man says something like this: “Father, I wish you would give me

that part of the property which is coming to me, as I want to go away from home and try my fortune in a distant land." His father converses with him in regard to the matter, and finally tells him that he will divide all the goods that he has between him and his brother, and that he is at liberty to go if he pleases, only he must be careful not to get into bad company and spend his money foolishly.

How many boys there are who think they will be able to get along a great deal better away from home than while under the care of their parents! And this is perhaps intended to be the case, in the wise order of our Heavenly Father, who sees that it is not best for us always to be dependent, but preferable that we should become self-reliant, and build our own fortunes. But when boys wish to leave home

in order that they may follow the wicked desires of their hearts, and plunge into all manner of vice, which they have been kept from by the wiser and stronger will of their parents, then it is very likely their future will be most terrible, and their sufferings great.

Thus, it would appear, it was with this young man, and thus it was with Adam and his descendants, who have left God and turned every one to his own way. Man thought he could get along well enough without God; but when he had sinned and heard the voice of God in the Garden, then he was afraid, because he knew he was guilty and deserved punishment.

But let us return to the young man, and find out what he did. He waited a few days, perhaps, hesitating about taking so much risk in leaving his father and

setting up for himself; but at last he collected all his money and clothing and other goods which he wished to carry with him, and commenced his journey. Perhaps he looked back at his old home, and found himself standing still, thinking of the delightful times he had enjoyed beneath his father's roof, and wondering whether he would ever see as happy days as those, and whether he should ever return to enjoy again the presence of those he loved. But the caravan with which he is traveling is moving on, and he must go with it, or be exposed to robbers and wild beasts; so he dashes the tear away from his eye, and makes haste to catch up with his fellow-travelers.

Day after day he travels on, until a land is reached which is far, far away from the place of his birth. All about him is strange.

The manners and customs of the people are different from those of his friends and acquaintances, as a general thing; but he finds that the people in this country know how to do wrong. Perhaps his father warned him against the dangers of the land. Perhaps he gave him some such advice as one of our great poets imagines a father, called Polonius, gave to his son Laertes:

“ Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear it that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice.
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France of the best rank and station

Are most select and generous, chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan often loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all,—to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

Whatever advice this young man's father gave him, there is one part of this advice of Polonius which he did not heed, and that is the portion relating to the selection of comrades. Like many young men, he was careless as to whom he associated with, only so that they were gay companions and flattered him in his course of sin and dissipation. Not only did he probably associate with bad men, but also with those bad women against whose flattering, deceitful tongues the wise man so often warns us in the Book of Proverbs.

Doubtless, this young man thought at first: “What a happy life I am leading!

No father to hinder me in doing what I wish to; no mother to caution me against what I am sure can not hurt me a great deal. To be sure, there may be some danger in going with these bad companions; but when I find that I am going to be greatly injured by them, why, then I will turn about and be steady and industrious." Alas, poor young man! He did not consider how greatly he had been injured even by choosing such persons to be his comrades. When one consents to go with the wicked, and casts in his lot with them and decides to have one purse together, it is like entering the outer circles of the fearful whirlpool. These circles are often so large that the vessel in which the sailor is does not seem to be going round at all; but as he gets nearer the center the circles become smaller and

smaller, till at last he becomes certain that he is nearing the dreadful vortex where his boat will be swallowed up in the dark, raging waters. Now he fully realizes his peril, and makes wonderful endeavors to save himself. If it is a row-boat in which he is, he plies the oars with all the might he can command. He toils till the drops of sweat stand out all over his face, and even his clothing is drenched with the moisture of his own body. He looks toward the center, and sees with dismay that it is still somewhat nearer; and then, with desperation depicted in his face, he redoubles his efforts till it would seem as though he would die from exhaustion, even though he should not reach the fatal mouth of the monster from whose clutches he is vainly endeavoring to free himself. But all his efforts are useless; and now, as the

boat nears the awful place where he must die, his hands refuse to hold the oars—they float away, and in the saddest despair he sits motionless for a few moments; then the boat rises in front, and, as the poor sailor lifts his hands in agony, both he and the boat disappear forever.

So our young man, whom we will call Zaza, began to go round in the outer circles of the whirlpool of sin, and it was only by great mercy and deep contrition that he escaped the depths of perdition, where so many wail in endless woe.

At last he wasted all the money he had. Often, no doubt, did he drain the red wine cup, and become so drunken as not to know what he was about. He forgot the words of the inspired wise man: “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when

it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick: they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." Probably these very associates of his, who had shared in his dissipation, and who had feasted and become drunken on his money, were the very ones to beat him and rob him, leaving him wounded and sore and sick, with no one to give him the least assistance, or speak a single kind word in his dull, aching ear.

So we shall often find it among the lovers of sinful pleasure. It is all very

well, so long as one has money and is able to treat others to what is pleasant and enjoyable. Then you will be the best of fellows, and be invited to places of entertainment on all hands; but when the low, black clouds of misfortune come over your prospects, and your purse no longer contains any money, these same pretended friends will leave you to yourself, and allow you to get along as well as you can, though you may be in a dying condition.

CHAPTER II.

BUT now another trouble stared Zaza in the face. Like all Eastern countries, this one to which he had gone was subject to a great scarcity of food at times. It happens once in a while that there does not come the ordinary amount of rain, and then the crops are short, or they have no grain at all, and many of the people perish from hunger. Thus it has happened in Persia within the last two years, and this being a country where there are few or no railroads and telegraphs, thousands have died, and great distress has prevailed over large portions of the land. In our own favored land it is quite possible that

such a state of things can not now occur by any of the ordinary failures of rain or sunshine, because, though one part of the country might be without the usual crops, yet other parts would have as much or more than usual, and it would not only soon be known that the people were in want, but they could be very speedily supplied by the numerous railroads which now stretch from one side of the country to the other, and run in all directions across its face.

But the famine was in the land, and Zaza was starving; so he must bestir himself and get something to do that he may not perish. He starts off to seek employment. The first man he asks looks at his hands, and, seeing that they are soft and white, thinks that Zaza does not know how to work, and tells him "No." Then

he goes to another and another and another, till he is very weary, and feels so faint for the want of food that he can scarcely go any further. At last he meets with an inhabitant of that country, who asks him what he can do. Zaza mentions over what he thinks he is able to perform; but these things the man has no need of, for he is a farmer, and Zaza has been bred a clerk. "Well, then," says Zaza, "give me any thing to do, for I must get a place, and though it may be something rough, yet I think I am willing to do almost any thing." The man says, "I have some hogs down in the fields yonder, under those carob-trees, and if you want to tend them, why, I don't care if you go and feed them." Zaza thought some time about the matter, for this was a pass to which he never had thought he would

come. He was a Jew, and it was an occupation to which no Jew was willing to stoop. They all looked upon the hog as an unclean animal. “And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven-footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat and their carcass shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.” (Leviticus xi, 7, 8.) “Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean; and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast or by fowl or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.” (Leviticus xx, 25.)

This being the case, Zaza hesitated: But what could he do? He was hungry and tired, and perhaps nearly naked. It

might have been night was coming on, stormy and cold, and he had no shelter. So he at last overcame his scruples, and hired out to this man, and he sent him to do that work which at first he shrank from, but afterward may have done with no compunction of conscience at all.

So with fallen man. He becomes utterly without righteousness. He finds himself without any of the grace of God in his heart, and he hires himself out to Satan to do just what the devil may desire of him. So we see men who have intelligence, and look as though they would feel great shame at their conduct, doing things that might make demons themselves blush, and yet they appear to think it is all right. They are “led captive by the devil at his will,” the Bible says, and find themselves at last abject

slaves of sin, working all manner of abomination and glorying in their shame.

It is thought by some that the young man of whom we are writing got lower still than the position of a swineherd. Perhaps he was so careless or so indolent that his master dismissed him. Or, may be, his master found some one else who would do the same work cheaper, and so employed another in Zaza's place. Then he wandered off and became more degraded and dejected than ever. So low did he get that he thought of the pods which the hogs had once eaten from the trough where he had thrown them, and he would have been glad even to get such food to appease the terrible gnawings of hunger which he felt; but there was no one who thought enough of him to give him even what the hogs ate. O what a condition



THE LOST SON AMONG THE SWINE.

was this for one to be in who was once in affluent circumstances and might have had all that was necessary to comfort! Let us look more closely at him as he sits meditating in his deep disgrace and poverty. His clothes are in rags. He has tried to patch them with new pieces or with unfulled cloth; but, as Christ says, the piece has shrunk and torn away, and the rent has been made worse. His hair has been uncombed for a long time, and hangs about his neck in tangled, matted masses; his feet are bare, as he has not enough money to procure even the cheapest kind of sandals; his eye is sunken, and his cheeks are hollow; his form is bent, so that he looks almost like a very old man; and his whole appearance is that of one of the most debased and filthy of beggars or scavengers.

But this is not all. This poor young man's mind is so affected that he does not know how badly off he is. Like some people who are kept in insane asylums, he may suppose he is quite respectable and well enough off, while at the same time he is the most unfortunate and depraved of men. He is like a man perfectly blind, who thinks he can see, or like a man very sick and near death, who supposes he is pretty well and will soon be able to perform his ordinary business.

What a true picture does this woe-be-gone spendthrift present of the state of man in his lost and fallen condition! Man in his sins is devoid of all original righteousness. The goodness that he seems to have is like filthy rags in God's sight. He is in need of the provisions of the Gospel, and will soon die eternally if he does not

partake of them; yet he often asks to be excused from coming to the table so richly furnished with all good things. He is unfit to appear in the presence of God and his holy angels; and yet he rejects the beautiful marriage garment which is so freely offered to prepare him to sit at the great supper and enjoy the felicities of heaven. And then, worst of all, he is beside himself, and does not know how sinful he is, or what a dreadful matter it is to be so evil at heart and bad in his life. He is apt to think that he is just as ready to die and just as ready for the judgment-day as he needs to be, while at the same time he is full of sin; and if he should be called suddenly away from this life, and thus appear at the bar of God to be judged, he would certainly be condemned, and sent to dwell with the wicked angels forever.

But Zaza came to himself. He was by some means brought to see his real condition, and realized at last to what a low place he had sunk. Then he thought of what he had once been. His mind roved back to the home of his boyhood; he thought of the joyous times he had when, free from care and trouble, he sported like a lamb in the green meadows, and had all that was necessary to his comfort. Then he thought of the time when, as a young man, he shared in the love and sympathy of his father, and how the servants bowed down to him, and delighted to perform services of kindness, and hastened to attend to his slightest wish. And those very servants—they were now living in the enjoyment of what would be to him most delicious fare, though it was as nothing to what he had once enjoyed. Then

he thought: "I wonder whether my father would receive me. Would he own as his son—such a poor, miserable, wicked sinner as I am? Perhaps not; I am too degraded, too low, too mean, too evil. Yet he might possibly, if I confessed my wickedness, be willing to let me come into the house as one of the lowest servants. I think I will try it, at any rate. I will get right up and start toward home. I may never reach it; but I will make the effort. And I will tell my father that I am a very great sinner; that I have sinned not only against him, but also against Heaven. I have done that which God hates. I will tell him that I do not deserve to be called his son any more; and I will ask him to take me as a hired servant, and put me at the very lowest employment, only so I may be in the house and look on his face, and

feel that he is not angry with me. O, that I might be permitted to wash his feet and sweep the floor after he has partaken of his meals, or even untie his sandal-thongs!"

Talking thus with himself, he arises and starts forward. He is very weak, and doubts whether he shall be able to reach the end of his journey. Still he struggles forward; and it is even wonderful to himself that he is able to make the progress he does. He has no money; so he is under the necessity of begging his way all along. His food for the day is often only a crust and a drink of water; his bed is often the hard ground, and his covering the dark sky, full of stars; yet still he drags himself toward his home, and is now coming where he sees objects which are familiar to him.

CHAPTER III.

LET us now, in our imagination, go to that home toward which he is traveling, and see what is going on there.

After Zaza left home, his father missed him greatly, and seemed to be sorry that his son had left him; but he gradually became reconciled to his absence, and comforted himself with the elder son, who remained with him, and to whom he had given all his remaining possessions. What occasioned Zaza's father to be still more reconciled to his absence was the fact that Zaza often wrote to tell him how he was getting along, and would assure him that he would soon accumulate a large fortune,

and return home, a very wealthy man, to take care of his father in his declining years. But as time wore on the letters became fewer and fewer, till at last they ceased altogether. The land was very far off; and though the father sent as often as possible by messengers who might be traveling in that direction, and though he often wrote, yet he heard no more from his son. The fact was Zaza was ashamed to write, and at last became so hardened in his sins and vices that he would not open the letters which his father sent; and so his father ceased to write to him. But O, how sad his heart felt that he did not get any word from his boy, whom he loved so fondly! How his heart sank within him, as he thought what terrible things might have occurred to him who once sat on his knee and prattled in his childish gayety

and innocence. "Perhaps," thought the father, "he has been destroyed by wild beasts, as Jacob thought his son Joseph had been; perhaps he has been set on by robbers, who have beaten him and left him to die at the roadside; perhaps he has fallen sick, and, after long lingering in pain and want among strangers who cared not for him, he has been tumbled into the cold grave, and not a tear shed over him as he has been left alone in the dark tomb." Thus reflecting, how sadly passed the hours; and what deep grief settled upon the heart of that affectionate father; and how he longed to know the worst, even though it might cause him deeper sorrow!

Children away from home can not realize how much pain of mind they cause when they are negligent in regard to

informing their parents as to their employments, pleasures, prospects, and general condition. Even the most simple account of the most trivial things is interesting to a parent; and there is often a great mistake made when it is thought that unless a letter contains something very grand and surprising, therefore it will not be interesting to those who take an interest in our welfare. The more simple and conversational and *personal* the letter, the more it is thought of and treasured. General news can be obtained from papers and books; but the feelings of one's heart must come from the person's own mouth or pen, and the more minute the information, the more does it reveal to those to whom we write the actual condition of the one who is writing.

At last Zaza's father concluded that he

was really dead, and mourned for him as though he had seen him laid in the sepulcher. Still, there would come at times the sweet hope that he was yet alive, and would some day come walking in strong and well, to give his father a recital of strange adventures and wonderful escapes through which he had passed. But as time wore on this hope grew less and less, and nearly disappeared.

One lovely evening, as the sun was near its setting, the father, hoping against hope, thought he would go, as he had often gone, and from the top of the town wall look off on the road which his son took as he left him. Long and earnestly does he gaze; and now he catches sight of a distant object, which has the appearance of a man, walking slowly toward the town. "It may be my son," says the father, half aloud.

He watches the traveler intently, and, as he draws nearer, there is that in the manner of his walk that greatly excites the old man.

Nearer and nearer comes the man; and now the father finds himself going forward to meet him. As he approaches, he becomes more and more certain that his son is before him. And then, when he discovers that it is really his boy, his heart fills with the deepest compassion. All his son's wretchedness can not repel his fatherly mercy and love. Nay, this only causes the heart of the father to feel for him more deeply than he otherwise could. His eyes fill with tears, as his heart swells with compassion; and so, running forward, he falls on his neck and kisses him. So did Joseph, when he made himself known to his brethren: "He fell upon his brother

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Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him." Also, when Joseph met his father in Goshen, "he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while."

How astonishing this must have been to Zaza. He was, perhaps, expecting a rough reception, and may have prepared his confession in view of having his father receive him, if he did at all, with great coldness. But as he has been received with so much tenderness, he is the more inclined to tell him all that is in his heart. To the father the meeting is one of unmixed delight, and it may be he is almost overcome with transports of joy; but in the mind of the son there is a remembrance of all his shameful life, which he

knows has caused his father much unnecessary pain.

And now, as they walk toward the house, Zaza informs his father of all his sinful course of life, how he lived with the sinful and the vile, what depths of wickedness and vice he fell into, and startles his father by his knowledge of so much evil. And then, as they enter the gate to the house, Zaza, feeling that he is unworthy to enter that house as a son, makes the confession he has prepared for his father's ear:

“Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.”

But the father would not let him finish the speech he had prepared, but interrupted him by calling out to the servants, who stood in great surprise about them:

“Bring from the closets the very best

garment you can find, and place it on him; and place a beautiful ring on his hand; and cover his bare feet with shoes. Then bring the fattest calf that can be found in the herd, kill it, and prepare it for the table. Then let us eat and be very joyful; for this is my son, who was just as though he had been dead, and had come to life again. He was lost, and now he is found."

CHAPTER IV.

IN this delightful scene is presented to us, as in a picture, the manner in which our Heavenly Father will receive all who come to him with true repentance and heart-felt sorrow for their sin. So soon as we rise from our position of abject sin and vice, he sees us and helps us; yea, before we rise, it is he who sends his Holy Spirit to inform us of our true condition. None of us, however wise, would ever know our sins, were it not that God in his great mercy shines into our hearts to give us a knowledge of ourselves and our sins. If some one should go into a darkened room and begin to sweep, though he might raise

considerable dust, yet he might perceive it not until he opened the blinds or raised the curtains somewhat—when, the sun shining across the room, there would be seen great numbers of small particles and motes filling all the air of the apartment. So, we can not know how bad our hearts are till God's Spirit shines into them; and then we see them just as bad as they are, and know how full they are of sin. O, that God may thus enlighten the heart of every reader of this book, and make plain the depravity therein, that he may be led to the fountain of cleansing “opened in the house of David!”

Like the poor young man we are writing of, we also are, in our natural state, ignorant of our true condition; and not only so, but prone to suppose that we are much better off than we really are. So the Lord says

to us: “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”

How sad that some who are lost on the dark mountains of sin should hate the light by which alone they can be led into the bright, happy vale of Gospel peace and joy. It is as though a guide were leading a man across a lonely country, where there are many pitfalls and precipices. The guide has a lantern; and, as the darkness grows more and more dense, he holds the

lantern closer to the ground, that he may tell the better where he is. The man who is being led across to his home sets upon the guide, blows out the light, breaks the lantern in pieces, and so injures the guide that he can not walk. You would say, “O, what a foolish man, to act thus when he does not know the way at all, and will now very likely perish all alone in the wild country so full of dangerous places and beasts of prey!” Yes; foolish indeed is the man who would so act, yet no more foolish than the man who “quenches the Spirit” and “grieves” the Holy Ghost. The blessed Spirit of God alone can show us the way to the Father; and yet men so act, are so much in love with the darkness of sin, that they wish to put out the light of God, and are so unwilling to obey the warning voice of the Spirit, that it leaves

them to themselves; and, when they are so left, terrible indeed is their condition. O, my readers, be not thus indifferent to God's kindness! Treat not with indifference or neglect that sweet and gentle monitor who comes to us to lure us from the deceitful paths of sin into the pleasant but narrow way that leads to life. Let us all gladly obey his voice, and fly to Christ, who alone has both the willingness and the power to save us.

It is very probable that when Zaza came repenting to his father he felt great shame and pain of heart. Yet it is just as probable that he also felt, as he confessed his sins, a peculiar delight; and very certain it is that, as we come to God in deep contrition and humility, we shall feel a sweet pleasure in the very act of repentance. One of our

hymns calls these feelings “the mystic joys of penitence:”

“The godly fear, the pleasing smart,
The meltings of a broken heart,
The tears that tell your sins forgiven,
The sighs that waft your souls to heaven.”

One day a gentleman went into an asylum where there was a large number of deaf and dumb children. He asked them, in writing, several questions, and among them was this: “What is that action of the mind, or emotion, which gives you the most delight?” One of the children wrote on a slate, “Hope;” another wrote, “Gratitude;” and another, “The assurance of the love of others;” but a little girl, who seemed to have a keener sense of real enjoyment, or who had been through a deeper experience, wrote on her slate, “*Repentance.*” So we shall find that it is no matter whether we

gain any thing by it or not, when we have done wrong, to repent of the wrong and sorrow for our sin is very delightful; and the more humble and contrite we feel, so much deeper will be the “joys which from repentance flow.” Lower and lower let us sink in our self-abasement before God, and then all the higher will God exalt us in the blessedness of the divine life, so full of true comfort and the peace of God.

God does not wish us to be merely his servants, though we shall find this a very happy condition, and the service of God a most delightful one; but he desires that we should be his sons and daughters. So the apostle John exclaims: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!” And in Paul’s writings we read: “Wherefore come out from among

them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

CHAPTER V.

ZAZA was clothed with rags; but he was not to wear these any longer. The best robe was brought and placed on him. So there is for us the robe of Christ's righteousness, which God the Father puts on us that we may be fit to appear at the marriage supper. And what a garment is this! A lady was once heard to say that she found a greater support from a beautiful, well-fitting dress, when in company, than from the possession of great virtues. So, many of us take pride in our raiment, and rely on the outward appearance in associating with others here in this world; but what shall we do when we come to the

day in which there shall be a division of the good and the bad, and when all our earthly titles and costly apparel will avail us nothing so far as concerns fitting us for the heavenly world? We wish to mingle with the angels and the holy ones who have overcome, and are safe in the home of the blessed; but if we would stand with boldness in the day of judgment, and mingle without shame among the throng about the throne, we must have on the robe of Christ's righteousness. Then all will be well; and we shall not be cast into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

“Put a ring on his hand,” said the father. This giving of a ring to another signified, in some cases, the bestowal of authority. When Joseph had told Pharaoh the interpretation of his dreams, Pharaoh

made him next in power to himself in Egypt, and to indicate this “he took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph’s hand.” Thus also did King Ahasuerus to Haman and Mordecai, when he honored them by placing them one after the other in the highest place. The ring was also used in ancient times as a seal; and even now in some Eastern countries it is still so used, kings thus stamping their names or initials, because they can not, in some cases, write them. But in the case of the returning son the ring was put on his hand to show the father’s love and friendship. So God will give us a token of his love and friendship, and a sign that we are adopted into his family; and that sign or token is the witness of the Spirit, which tells us that our sins are forgiven, and that we are heirs of God and joint

heirs with Jesus Christ. O how thankful we should be that God the Father is so gracious unto us as to grant us this sure evidence of our acceptance! Here are some verses of one of our hymns which refers to this subject:

“ His Spirit, which he gave,
Now dwells in us, we know;
The witness in ourselves we have,
And all its fruits we show.

The meek and lowly heart,
That in our Savior was,
To us his Spirit does impart,
And signs us with his cross.

Our nature’s turned, our mind
Transformed in all its powers;
And both the witnesses are joined—
Thy Spirit, Lord, with ours.”

To go barefoot is a sign of humiliation and mourning; and therefore David, when his ungrateful son Absalom revolted against him, “went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had

his head covered, and he went barefoot." That was to show how grieved he felt at the unnatural conduct of the son whom he so greatly loved as to wish that he had died for him, when he was told that he had been slain. Perhaps Zaza may not have been obliged to be barefoot, but had thus taken off his shoes to show his grief at having been so sinful, and his humiliation in view of his many transgressions. But be this as it may, his father did not wish him to continue in grief, neither did he wish to humble him unnecessarily; so he told the servants to put shoes on his feet, and thus let him know that he was welcome to his place as a son, and that the father desired him to walk in the path of filial obedience and enjoyment.

If we humble ourselves in the sight of God he will exalt, he will honor us, and

give us strength to walk continually in the way of his commandments. He will so prepare our hearts by the preparation of the Gospel of peace, with which the apostle says we are to clothe our feet (Ephesians vi, 15), that we shall serve him with a willing mind, and delight to glorify him in all we do and say—walking in the light as his sons, until he shall call us to walk the delightful streets of the New Jerusalem, safe from thorns and flints.

But the father did not think it enough for his son to be clothed, and have a ring, and have shoes on his feet; they must also have a feast and greatly rejoice at the return of the lost one. So he gave orders that the fatted calf should be killed. It is . called *the* fatted calf. This may have been because the father kept a certain calf fat at all times, so that he might be in readiness

to celebrate the return of his son whenever he should come. Or it may be this calf was fattened for some other feast, for which they had been preparing—the coming of some great man to the house, or even some great religious feast—and that the father thought the return of his son was an event more worthy to be celebrated by killing the calf, and eating it with rejoicing, than any other event, even though it should pertain to religious things. This may teach us that the return of sinners to God is an event which God thinks more of than any other, and that he had rather have those who feel they are lost and undone come to his feet, and repent, than to look upon the most solemn religious assembly, where the hearts of the people are not engaged, or the most select and tastefully dressed congregation, who might

go through the forms of worship while their minds were wholly taken up with the vanities of the world.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE was not only eating at this feast, but there was music and dancing; for it is said the elder son heard these, as he came near the house. It was, and is, a very general custom among what are called Oriental nations to entertain friends and guests with music and dancing. Thus Miss Seward, who went round the world lately with the Hon. W. H. Seward, tells us that the party were several times entertained by musicians and dancing-girls coming in and performing before them. But in all cases these musicians were hired musicians, and so also with the dancers. They were employed as well at

funerals as at marriages and other occasions of festivity, only at funerals the ones who danced at feasts would then mourn. So when Christ went to raise the daughter of Jairus he found these hired performers making a great noise and lamenting; and these doubtless were the ones who, when Christ said, “She is not dead, but sleepeth,” laughed him to scorn, so utterly were they without true feelings of condolence and courtesy.

Some persons have supposed that, in this dancing at the return of the prodigal son, there is a warrant for the dancing that is practiced in these times by the vain, the giddy, and the thoughtless; but nothing could be farther from the truth. Among the Jews, as well as among most other Eastern nations, the men and women, boys and girls, never danced together, but

always apart. These hired dancers were generally girls, and once in a while girls of high birth; but this was such a seldom occurrence, a high-born girl dancing at a feast, that when Salome, the daughter of Herodias, danced before her uncle and father-in-law, Herod Antipas, he was so much pleased that he promised, with an oath, and probably under the influence of wine, to give her whatsoever she should ask, even though it were the half of his kingdom. And this dancing resulted in the sad death of that good and great man, John the Baptist. This dancing was also, as a general thing, an expression of joy, so much so that it is placed in opposition to mourning in many places in the Scripture, as in Ecclesiastes iii, 4: "A time to mourn and a time to dance;" which can not mean that there is a time when it is right to

dance in any way we please—for then the third verse of the same chapter would make it right for us to kill in any way we pleased.

The modern kind of dancing, consisting of a large number of men and women and children getting together and spending the whole night in cutting foolish figures about the floor, when they should be asleep, has no Scriptural warrant at all, but is of the same character as those festivities which are called *revelings* in Galatians v, 21, and 1 Peter iv, 3, which are severely condemned as a work of the flesh, and placed alongside the most terrible of sins and iniquities, to show how God abhors them.

But now let us return to the house, and behold this company of friends, servants, and neighbors rejoicing over the return of

the long-lost son. The guests are probably reclining on couches about one or more tables, in a large room called the guest-chamber. The father occupies the center of the couch at the head of the main table, and is reclining on his left side, resting on the elbow of his left arm, so that his right arm may be free to convey the food to his mouth. Right before the father, also reclining on his left arm, is the son; and as he leans back his head toward his father he touches his father's bosom—and this was what was called lying in one's bosom. Thus John was in the bosom of Christ when they were partaking of the Last Supper. And this is the reason why it is said that Lazarus was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom, because heaven was considered by the Jews under the figure of a feast, where Abraham presided

and had the chief place; and Jesus, in order to show how happy the poor beggar was, and how greatly his state differed from the one he suffered here, represented him as the second in rank and enjoyment at the heavenly banquet.

The friends and neighbors, who have been called in to rejoice with the glad father, look at the son thus reclining in the bosom of the father, and they smile one to another, and express their joy and pleasure in exclamations of gladness; while the hired musicians strike up a more exhilarating strain on their instruments, and the hired dancers endeavor to express the common joy by brisker movements, and by appropriate gestures and clapping of their hands. What a bright and happy scene! All are full of enjoyment. The servants are bringing in dish after dish of

savory meat, such as Isaac wished his son Esau to prepare for him, and pouring forth into the cups of the guests the sweet, rich, unfermented wine, so nutritious and palatable; the lights are flashing,—and over all is diffused an air of comfort, repose, and heart-felt enjoyment.

So the Savior tells us there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. In those bright and heavenly mansions, when the news is brought that a poor, lost, forlorn son of Adam has given up his wanderings and returned to God through Jesus, then all along the hosts of heaven there sound glad acclamations of joy, and there is felt a greater gladness than could possibly exist on account of any other occurrence whatever. And these angels are not hired performers! No! From the depths of their hearts they rejoice, because

they love the same Savior that we love, and are glad to see him honored by the penitence and faith of the most wretched and sinful of all earth's inhabitants. Just *one* sinner's repentance makes them rejoice. And are you a sinner, reader? Have you never shed the tear of sorrow for sin, nor bowed yourself in contrition before God? Why not now cause angels to rejoice as you submit your stubborn heart to the refining power of divine grace, and make heaven glad at the return of one more wanderer?

“Through all the courts the tidings flew,
And spread the joy around;
The angels tuned their harps anew,—
The long-lost son is found.”

CHAPTER VII.

BUT now we must turn to another scene. There is one who does not enjoy all this excitement, and who is unwilling to mingle in these festivities. We step out of the house where it is all light and joyfulness, and find that the sun has just set, and darkness is rapidly coming on, as it always does in those countries which are near the Equator, the stars are beginning to appear, and the cattle are returning to their stalls. There is approaching the gate of the town a man, who walks as though he were very tired. It is the elder son, the brother of the wanderer who is inside the house enjoying so much. He has been in the

fields, hard at work, no doubt; and now returns from his daily labor to be refreshed by food and sleep, hoping also to meet a welcome from his father, and a word of praise also for the faithful manner in which he has been doing his work. As he draws near the house he finds that his father is not outside to welcome him, and perhaps this makes him feel a little unpleasantly. He sees that the house is all lit up, and he hears the music and dancing which is going on within, and this makes him feel still more surly. He does not go in and see what is going on, and why there is so much rejoicing, though he might know that his father would not have such a time of rejoicing unless there was something to rejoice at; but he sharply calls a servant, and demands of him what all these things mean.

“What is this music for,” asks he, “and why is this dancing going on? It would seem that a feast has been made, and nothing has been said to me about it.”

“O, a very joyful event has taken place,” says the servant. “What do you think? Nothing less than the return of your brother! He who was so long away has returned, and your father feels very glad about it, and has killed the calf which has been fatted for some special occasion, because he has at last received him safe and sound.”

The servant thought this piece of pleasant news would make the brother feel very joyful; but what was his surprise to see the brother’s brows lower, and his face grow pale!

“Why do you not go in and see your brother, and rejoice with those who are

welcoming him to his home after his long absence?"

"I go in? Not I. If my father thinks so much of one who has done so wickedly, as we have heard this son of his has done, and can not spare time to come out and welcome me, after all my hard work, why he can rejoice without me. What a fool I am to work so hard, and try to please my father, when this son of his, who has led an idle and sinful life, is better off in my father's love than I! No, indeed; I do n't go in to any such performances."

So he was extremely angry, and utterly refused to greet his brother and unite in the joy of his father.

Here we see the results of envy. How many times we lose great pleasures and benefits by getting angry at the prosperity and success of others, and foolishly staying

away from places and companies where we might experience much enjoyment, if we would only look upon ourselves in a proper light, and not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, or begrudge others the happiness they feel!

Now the servant probably goes in and tells the father that the elder son is without and angrily refuses to come in. The father therefore rises, and retires at once, in order to persuade him to enter. He looks very wrathful at his father as he approaches; for he feels that he, and he alone, has a right to that father's good will and love.

“Come in, my son; come in,” cries the father. “Rejoice with us in the feast at the return of your brother, who has at last come to make glad the heart of his father, and prevent his gray hairs from going down

with sorrow to the grave. Be not angry; but come in at once, and be merry."

But these words were lost on the stubborn son, and he replied to his father in such a manner as to show his selfishness and envy and rage. First he praised himself:

"Just remember how many years I have served thee, and all this time I have kept the commandments you gave me—never committing a single fault—and yet you never thought enough of *me* to give me a kid (the littlest, poorest goat in the herd), in order that I might have a feast and invite my companions; but just as soon as this son of yours comes home, after having wasted your goods on shameful women, why, you go to work and kill the nicely fatted calf, the very best one in all the stalls, and have a great time."

What an evil heart this brother must have had, to think so little of the return of his poor, starving, naked, barefoot brother, and to find such fault with his father just because he had been kind to that son, whom he loved, and whom he had given up as dead! But the father did not appear to take any affront at this language. He loved this elder son also, and wished him to have a different disposition from what he seemed to have, judging from his words. So he kindly and soothingly said :

“My son, remember that you are always *with me*; you have me as your constant companion, and every thing that I have is yours—not only the goods which I gave you when your brother went away, but my love and sympathy and care and help in all the arrangements and employments of

the homestead. It was certainly a very proper thing for us to do to make this feast and have a merry time, being glad with all our hearts; for this thy brother was the same as though he were dead and had come to life again—he was as though he had been entirely lost in a desolate wilderness, and had been found and restored to his home and friends."

CHAPTER VIII.

THIS elder son represents those who find fault with Jesus for receiving sinners and eating with them. When Jesus was on earth there were people called Pharisees, who were very proud, and thought that they alone had a claim on the love of God. They thought they were the chosen people, and that no others ought to dare to trust in God, especially if they did not do just as the Pharisees told them to do. They would have thought very well of Jesus if, when he came, he had flattered them and associated with them alone. How highly they would have spoken of Jesus if he had never reproved them for their hypocrisy.

and formality, and treated the poor and downtrodden with contempt! But Jesus did not do this. He seemed to prefer the company of the poor to that of the rich, though he never despised the rich because they were rich, neither should we. He seemed to delight to call the common people about him, and teach them all about the kingdom of heaven. And not only so, but when opportunity offered he would sit down to eat with those who were called sinners, and those public men who collected the taxes from the people, and many of whom were extortioners, and heartily despised by these arrogant Pharisees who thought the Jewish nation was the greatest on earth, and ought not to be under the rule of any other. They would not listen with a teachable spirit to the words of Jesus, nor obey what he said;

neither would let others do so if they could help it. You have heard the story of the dog in the manger, I have no doubt, that would not eat the hay himself, nor let the cows which wished to eat it have a single bite. So these proud men, who thought they were the most religious people in the world, were horrified when Jesus went and sat down with the poorest and worst men and ate with them; and they found a great deal of fault because these poor sinners were invited to the Gospel feast. Just like the elder son, they became very angry when the favor of heaven was bestowed on others than themselves.

You will recollect, too, that the brother of Zaza said to his father, “When this *thy son* was come.” He did not wish to own him as his brother, and would throw all the disgrace of his conduct on the father.

And not only so, but he would make this conduct worse than it really was, if possible; and so he speaks of his brother having spent his money and other possessions in the company of abandoned women, though there is nothing to show this beyond the mere surmise of the elder son. Then he went still farther, and intimated that his younger brother had wasted what was not his own, when he said, “Which hath devoured *thy* living;” as though what Zaza had spent was not entirely his own.

Thus he made out in his envy and anger just as bad a case as he could. And so the Pharisees called the sinners about them hard names, and abused them, making their case worse than it really was; but Jesus saw through all this, and he told them that these very ones whom they

called names would go into the kingdom of heaven before them.

Now this spirit, which was in the Pharisees in Jesus' day, is in many people who live in our day. They seem to think that Jesus came to die only for the rich and the great, and despise the poor, being unwilling that the lowly and sinful should enjoy any of the advantages which they possess.

This spirit shows itself when people build great and splendid churches, finishing them with great care, and adorning them with much elegance, and then look with aversion on the poor and the meanly dressed, as though they had no right to enter such a magnificent building and worship God amid such elegant adornments. I have heard of some of these proud people who were shown the foolishness of such feelings. On one Sunday a

man entered one of the fine churches of New York City. It was an elegant church, and richly decorated within and without; but he was arrayed in a shabby-looking cloak, which covered the most of his person. When he entered the church, nobody paid him any attention, till one of the ushers came to him and asked him roughly if he wished a seat. He replied that he did, and the usher placed him in a pew which was reserved for any poor or unknown person who might come in. The service proceeded; and as the man became somewhat warm he allowed the cloak to slip from off his shoulder, and this revealed the shoulder-straps of a major-general in the United States army. Now, as this was seen by gentlemen about him, one after another politely invited the stranger to take a seat in his pew; but all these invi-

tations were respectfully declined, and when the services were ended the gentleman in the shabby cloak left the church, entered a fine carriage waiting for him, and drove rapidly away. It was afterward found that the stranger was Major-General N. P. Banks.

This spirit of ill-feeling at the reception of the poor by the Savior is a very baleful one. Let us never indulge it, but rather be glad that all are invited to the Savior's heart of love. How mean it would appear if, when a little boy or girl should be lost and after a long search found again, there should be some one to object to the general joy and say, "I do n't see what you want to make so much fuss over a child for!" Let us rejoice that the poorest and the wickedest are sought after by the Savior, and that there is a warm welcome waiting

for all who will come humbly knocking at the gate.

It is a sad thing to be lost in sin; and yet we may even rejoice to hear one say, "I am lost!" as this shows he knows his condition, and is ready to be told the glad tidings that Christ came to save just such as he feels himself to be.

Some of you have heard, I suppose, of the great Methodist preacher, George Whitefield. This very successful minister had a brother who became converted, and was for some years an earnest, sincere Christian. But he declined in religion, and finally wandered far off from the Savior, neglecting his duty, and becoming again quite wicked. One afternoon he heard his brother George preach, and this again awakened him, and he went away in great distress of mind. While he was

sitting at the supper-table he groaned, and could neither eat nor drink, saying, again and again:

“I am a lost man!”

There was a lady present called the Countess of Huntingdon, a noble lady of England, who counted herself happy to be a follower of Jesus, and to belong to the Methodists, though in that early day they were greatly despised. This lady sat opposite this troubled man at the table, and when she heard him say, “I am a lost man!” she exclaimed:

“I am glad of it; I am glad of it.”

“It is wicked in you to say you are glad I am a lost man,” said he.

“I repeat it,” said she; “I am heartily glad of it.”

He looked at her, astonished at what seemed to him the very essence of barbarity.

“I am glad of it,” said she, “because it is written, ‘The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.’”

Then the tears began to roll down his cheeks as he said :

“What a precious Scripture truth is that! And how is it that it comes with such power to my mind? O Madam,” said he, “I bless God for that. Then he will save me. I trust my soul in his hands; he has forgiven me.”

Soon after he said this, he went out of the room and began to feel very sick, and all at once, without any other forewarning, fell down and died.

O what a mercy it was that this man felt that he was a lost man, and that the good lady spoke that word in season to him, so that he was directed to the Savior, and, trusting in him, found again

the pardon of his sins and acceptance with God before death came and fixed his state forever!

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT a sad thing it is to be lost! To be lost means to be away from home and friends and comforts. It may be at sea, or in the forest, or on the prairie; but, wherever it is that one is lost, he finds that he has no pleasant home-roof to cover his head, or friends to sympathize with him and help him. He becomes hungry, and wishes for some of the delightful food he once ate with so much relish. Perhaps he has closed his eyes to think, and opens them to look on the food he imagines is before him; but he looks in vain—nothing but the level sea is before him, or the dry leaves of the forest, or the long grass of

the prairie. He becomes weary, and would be so much pleased to recline his fatigued body on the easy bed of his attractive home; but as he opens his eyes he finds nothing to lie on but the hard, cold ground, the frozen snow, or the single plank which keeps him from a watery grave. He is getting very weak, and would be so greatly pleased to have a hand to support him as he staggers along in his misery; but no hand is stretched out to his aid, and he opens his eyes to find himself alone, all, all alone, with many miles between him and the friends he so much loves.

So with those who are lost in sin. They are far from their Father's house, and the comforts which that home affords. They hunger; but they find no food to satisfy that hunger in the world. They thirst; but they drink of the salt, bitter

waters of sin, only to be made the more thirsty thereby. They look for help to their sinful companions; but they find that the ungodly men about them are only like so many broken reeds, which fail them in the day of distress. They have no true friend to aid them; and how sad is their condition, thus without a single one in whom they may trust!

But to be lost means to be exposed to great dangers. If a man is lost in a forest, he is in danger of being devoured by wild beasts. Wild animals lurk in every jungle or covert, to pounce on the unwary traveler and tear him to pieces. The stream he may wish to cross, on the frail limb, or by swimming, may overwhelm him in its waters. In the mountains, the great ravine or cavern yawns to devour him, as he makes a misstep, and is hurled down many

feet to certain death. If it is in the snowy regions of the North that he is lost, then the icy cold waits to creep over him and still the currents of his life-blood. If in the tropical climate, there the intense heat may prostrate him, venomous insects may sting him, or the deadly miasm may steal into his system, and soon cause him to lie down in death.

So with the sinner away from God, in the presence of his enemies. Satan always has his servants ready to tempt and destroy. The rum-seller tempts with his poisonous drinks, the gambler tempts with his cards and his lotteries and other games of chance, the wicked woman allures him him to ruin, and the infidel poisons his mind with deadly error. There are pitfalls on every hand, and dark precipices of sin all across the path of the worldling,

waiting to catch his unwary feet and hasten his destruction. Oh how many dangers threaten the man or woman, or even the child, who is lost in sin, and wandering in the broad road that leads to destruction!

But to be lost means also to be liable to great self-deception. It has been said by some that when a man is lost on the prairie, or in the woods, he is very likely to travel around in a circle, while he thinks he is making headway in the direction he wishes to go. This has been doubted by others, but a gentleman writing to a New York paper from Texas confirms the fact, and says:

“It is a fact well known to all frontiersmen that, when persons are bewildered, they frequently travel in a perfect circle, sometimes keeping the same track till they have made half a dozen equal rounds; at other

times making the circle larger or smaller each time. It is not by any means always the case, when a person is lost; but it is so frequent that it is within the experience of every one who has been much in the woods. In calm and cloudy weather, and in a country of much sameness of appearance, the best woodsmen get so bewildered as to 'take the circles.' Persons not accustomed to the woods will sometimes do so when the sun is shining and a steady breeze is blowing. On the level or gulf prairies of this country, on a calm, foggy morning, no man can travel without a road. It is an incident of every-day occurrence, in the Spring and Fall seasons, that men are thus becalmed on the prairie as effectually as are ships at sea. Nor will a compass mend the matter; for it can not be carried steadily enough to keep its meridian,

and the course it points can not be kept for fifty yards. If a man attempts it, he will make a circle and come back to the place he started from. The circle will be large or small, generally, in proportion to the density of the fog—sometimes only a hundred yards in diameter; at other times a mile, but seldom more. The circles thus made are perfect. This kind of wandering seems to arise from an attempt to go a straight course when there is nothing to guide the senses, or when the usual guides of sun, wind, or the general contour of the country are disregarded. It rarely befalls children, who do not attempt to go on a *course*, but only run from one visible point to another equally perceptible."

I have heard of a man who thus "took the circles," as they say, and who walked on in the snow, thinking that he was going

straight ahead. Still he had some little misgiving, till at last he saw the tracks of another man, and then he said to himself, "I am all right now; for here are the footsteps of another man, and so I am certainly on the right track." On he went; and at last he came to a place where another man seemed to come into the path, and then he was surer yet, and went on again with a light heart, till, after a while, he came to a third track coming into the path where he was going. Thinking this was a little strange, he thought he would examine the prints of the feet more closely, when what was his great surprise to find that he had been walking round and round, these tracks all being his own, and that he had made no real headway at all.

So, I have thought, with those who are lost on the wide, barren heaths of ungod-

liness. They go round and round, thinking, no doubt, that they are making progress straight toward the heavenly city; but really only wearing out their lives in a round of follies, and in a circle of gayety and iniquity, which will at last narrow down to the most insipid and unsatisfactory of conditions. Some who are thus lost find what seems to them the track of others walking the same way; and yet this may be but their own imaginations, and they may suppose they have company, when it is only the foolish ideas of their own hearts.

If we would not be thus forever going round and round in the witches' circle which the devil has formed for our feet, we must break away from his enchantment, and steer a straight course toward our Father's house. Many, O how many!

have sunk down, never to rise again; and how many more are apparently running on in the same foolish and ruinous course.

CHAPTER X.

THERE is another deception to which a lost man is liable, and that is to be drawn away by what is called the *mirage*. All of my readers who have studied natural philosophy have come to some knowledge of this strange thing, and some of them may have seen it. A mirage is caused by the reflection of rays from distant objects, or the sky, on a stratum of hot air rising from the burning sands or heated earth, so that the traveler supposes that he sees a lake of water in the distance, in whose waters he may cool his heated body, or slake his severe thirst.

A wanderer in the desert is very likely

to be deceived by this illusion. He has journeyed many miles perhaps, and is lost from the caravan with which he was traveling. He shouts, but all in vain; and now struggles on to get to a place of safety. His efforts not only weary him, but produce a great thirst, and he has not the means of satisfying it. The sun beats fiercely upon his head, and the reflected heat burns his face. He feels as though he were in a furnace. At last he sees an object in the distance, and, gazing intently, finds it is a solitary palm-tree, which appears to stand by the shore of a beautiful lake. O, if he may but reach that water, and take just one refreshing draught, it seems as though he would be willing to die! He plods on with renewed courage toward the object of his desire, but it seems to be a great way off. Hour after

hour he walks, and yet finds that it is in the distance. Then the dreadful thought comes that it is a deception; and so does this dispirit him that he sinks down in despair, and, with eyes staring in the direction of the false lake, he perishes in his loneliness and agony.

We are all journeying through life, and there are many things about us to allure and deceive. Lost in the desert of sinful worldliness, we are very apt to see in the distance what appear to be delightful places and pleasant retreats; but as we endeavor to approach them these desirable things recede, and finally we are left to mourn when all hope is gone, and say, “How have I hated instruction!”

But to be lost, and remain lost, means that one will certainly perish. This thought is what makes a lost condition,

when it is known to be such, one of great trouble and terror. "If I do not get relief soon," a lost man says, "I shall surely die." Full of this thought, he pushes on with all the strength he has left; but, as the hours and days pass away, his hope becomes weaker and weaker, and then, not finding the way, he is certain to fall down and die. How many have thus perished! Their bones strew the desert. Their frozen bodies, and portions of their clothing, are found in after years in the melting glacier, or they sink in the deep waters, to be the prey of the monsters of the deep.

And this, too, is what gives such great anxiety to those who seek the lost. They know if the lost are not soon found they must die. Great is their danger, and great efforts must be made to save them. I knew of a mother who was seeking a little

boy and girl of hers whom she supposed were lost, and so great was her solicitude for them and desire to find them that those who were with her said it seemed as though she would go right through the stone walls which were across her way.

So the danger of the sinner is very great, and if he remains lost he will soon perish. The Savior said to some about him, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." To perish in one's sins—O what a terrible thing is this! To be *lost* is bad enough, but to perish—ah, who shall tell fully what this means? The sinner stands on the brink of a precipice; he need only take one step more, and he falls down, down, down, far down into the abyss of woe and anguish, where hope never comes, and the blackness of darkness reigns for ever and ever.

But he needs not perish. What blessed words are those which Jesus spoke, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save them that are lost!” How much Christ must have felt for a lost world, to leave the heavenly mansions and come to earth to suffer and die as he did for all who are in their sins! He was rich, O how rich! in form, in glory, in honor, in power, in life; but all these he laid aside, and became a poor babe, a poor youth, a poor man, hiding his glory, keeping back his power, giving up his honor, and laying down his life, to bring back the lost.

And how many has the Good Shepherd saved! How many wandering sheep has he led back to the warm, well-supplied fold! How many little lambs has he taken in his bosom, and, carrying them tenderly along, placed them where they

are forever safe from all harm and from all evil.

O that Jesus may find you, my dear readers! Let him not go back from his seeking empty-handed. Be willing that he should lead you quietly along to the place of safety and peace! How dangerous your lost condition, how full of peril, how near the world of despair! Hear the voice of the Savior calling, calling as the morning sun arises to beautify the earth; calling, calling as the noonday heat spreads over the land; calling, calling as the sun gets low in the west, and the evening dew begins to fall,—still calling to the wandering one to turn to him, and, following his blessed footsteps, be restored to the joys of home.

CHAPTER XI.

AND now, in conclusion, I will give two or three instances of persons being lost, and their wonderful deliverance. The first is that of a Methodist minister in Australia—a strange, distant land. This minister started to go to a place in the mountains of the Upper Allyn, a place which was seldom visited by ministers, and in doing so thought he would attempt to take a short cut across the country. In doing this he lost his way.

There had been a long-continued spell of dry weather, which now broke up, and it rained five days almost incessantly, and was so cloudy he never saw the sun once.

The minister lost his horse, and then wandered about endeavoring to get out of the thick bushes, but making no headway. He had nothing to eat for six days, and he suffered intensely. Sometimes he would dream that he was eating delicious victuals, and this made his sleep terrible; and worse yet was the waking, when he opened his eyes to see that all these dreams were only delusions.

On the sixth day, the skin of his hands began to peel off, and he seemed to be sinking very fast. At every step, almost, he would halt and gasp for breath, and in writing about his dreadful condition he says:

“How lonely, how unutterably lonely, should I have been without Christ! With him I can not say I was lonely. A change was likely speedily to ensue; the coming

night might make great alterations in my frame, and the morrow might find me powerless for motion. This I well knew, and in the midst of cold chills and gnawing hunger I gave myself to prayer. I was aware that death by starvation was a very painful and lingering death, preceded by fierce throes and convulsions; but I had seen men die terribly hard upon their beds, surrounded by all their friends could do for them. Would the wild dogs discover me and torment me when I became yet weaker? would they tear my flesh and suck my blood before I died? Would delirium come, and should I say foolish and blasphemous things when reason left her throne? These and other inquiries were frequently on my mind, but they excited not the slightest perturbation or anxious thought. ‘Take no thought for the morrow,’

was an exhortation of my Savior which I received from him power to obey. ‘As thy day, so shall thy strength be,’ was a promise I fully believed. As to the wild dogs, I reflected that they were most certainly under God’s restraint, every one of them; and convulsions and throes I regarded as also entirely subservient to his will. I thought of Christ’s love, and the remembrance was blessed. I realized his mercy, and it was sweeter to me than honey or the honey-comb. Sunshine is never so glorious as when it pillows on the darkest cloud. I was probably about to die—my frame was sinking fast; but it was dying to live forever, and thus I felt it to be.”

While this minister of the Gospel was thus getting ready to die, he heard a voice at a great distance, and, rousing himself

and summing up all his remaining energy, he called in reply. Whence came the voice, and who was it uttering it?

It seems that many miles from where the dying missionary was there resided some good German people, and on this very day one of the young men felt that he *must* go out on a hunt. So he gathered a party, and prepared to start. His father endeavored to prevent him from going, and afterward said to the minister:

“O Mr. Vanderkiste, when we all thought Edward must be getting wrong in his head for insisting on going into the bush that day, little did we know what God Almighty had for him to do there.”

So these young men sallied forth for their hunt, little thinking that they were hunting a missionary. They rode all day, and toward night they saw some wild

cattle and chased them, but in their turn were chased by the cattle, and when they had distanced their ferocious pursuers they found that one of the party had become lost. They therefore went in the direction they supposed he was, calling out, *Coo ey!* *coo ey!* as the natives of Australia do in like circumstances, but still no response, till, after getting to the end of a mountain range, they called still more loudly, and thought they heard a response. Again they called, and again came the answering cry from the top of one of the mountains about two miles off. Two of the party began to ascend the mountain, though they knew it could not be their lost companion; yet they felt it must be some one lost, and that it was their duty to rescue him. When they reached the summit of the mountain, they saw an object in

tattered clothes creeping toward them with what seemed to be a pistol in his hand, and thinking it might be a bushranger, who had allured them there to rob them and perhaps kill them, they retreated and were going to run off, when the cries seemed to be so full of distress that they returned, and found the man to be the lost missionary.

There were a number of providential things in this finding of the minister. In the first place, this was the first day in which the great mountain streams created by the recent rains could be crossed for a week. In the next place, if one of these hunters had not been lost they would not have been led to the place where they found the minister. Then, if it had not been for the feeling in the mind of the young man who organized the party, that he *must* go a-hunting, they

never would have started. And then, most remarkable of all, the minister had been deaf for a part of two days, and had he continued so for an hour longer he would not have heard the voices of those who called. How wonderful is God's mercy to us, and how willing ought we to be to pray to such a merciful God in all hours of distress that we may be guided aright, and led in the way everlasting!

The young men kindly took the poor, dying missionary in charge, and soon conveyed him to a place of safety and comfort. Finding he could not lie on the bed, he arose and sat by the fire through the night, and he says:

“As I thus passed the hours of the night, its silence broken only by the notes of the cuckoo and the low utterances of the wind, I meditated on my marvelous

deliverance from death, and prayed earnestly that the Lord would be graciously pleased to make his care over me a blessing to others."

CHAPTER XII.

THE next story I will tell you is a beautiful illustration of the faith which may be possessed by a child. There were three young children of a Mr. and Mrs. Howley, who went out into the woods one Saturday to pick berries, without the knowledge of their parents, and wandered until they were lost. Not returning before evening, their parents became very anxious about them, and, in company with about a hundred other persons, started off into the woods to hunt for them. After a long search, they at last succeeded in finding them.

It seems that after having picked enough

berries they thought it time to return home; but on turning about for that purpose they could not find the road, nor any way out of the woods. What should they do? They sat down on a log a long time, not knowing which way to turn, and were quite certain that they were lost.

At last Mary, who was the oldest, said to the others:

“Let us pray to God to help us to find our way out.”

Then they all kneeled down, and, lifting up their hands to God, they prayed that they might be delivered. Then they took a new start, and soon found whortleberries plenty, and these they ate to satisfy their hunger.

The little ones now commenced to call aloud the names of the different members of the family.

Carrie was the youngest, and she said all the time, "I want some milk;" and then she said:

"O how tired I am! I can 't go any further."

So she sat down to rest.

Ida was the next oldest, and she was so tired and sleepy that she said:

"I had rather stay right here than to go another step. I can 't go any further. I must stay here and go to sleep."

Mary then stripped the bark from off a dead tree, and laid it down on the ground. Then she got a lot of leaves together, and covered the bark for a pillow, and, making as good a bed as she could, she laid her two little sisters on the ground to sleep.

The sun had gone down by this time, and it was getting dark, and Mary felt quite lonely. So she kneeled down again,

and prayed to God that he would save them from being lost, and take care of them through the night if they had to stay there; and she thought it was quite likely that they would, as she had given up all hope of finding her way out.

Mary was a thoughtful girl, and she knew that the night would be long, and that her little sisters would be very likely to wake up hungry in the morning. So she filled her pockets with winter-greens to pacify them, every few minutes calling on some of the members of the family.

When these little children were found, the two youngest were quietly sleeping, and Mary, not yet ten years old, was upon her knees, praying to God for help in that hour of loneliness and distress.

Whenever you are in distress or trouble, fail not to call on our Father in heaven,

who has promised to be a present help in time of trouble—yea, a *very* present help. Especially if you are lost to God by sin, let the prayer of your heart go up earnestly to God for deliverance, and he will certainly hear you.

And now I have a story to give you, which I saw in one of our late Church papers. It is a very pleasing story about a little girl named Nelly:

“A little girl one day had wandered far from her home in thoughtless play, and when the sun was getting low she could not tell which way to turn. As is very common in such a case, she took exactly the wrong course. The sun went down and the stars came out, and O how the little girl sobbed when she thought of mother! How she would reach out her arms in her anguish, and call again and

again for mother to come! but there was no voice to answer. O how the mother's heart would have rejoiced if she could only have heard that cry! How she would have flown to gather her darling into her bosom!

“But deeper grew the evening shades, and poor, lost Nelly felt she must spend the night in the wilds alone, all alone! How dreary and full of terror was the thought! But presently a familiar sound broke on her ear. It was the bleating of a little lamb, like her, belated and away from its mother's side. It was a very pleasant sound to her, and gave her fresh hope. It did not seem afraid or lost. It seemed to know which way it should go. So Nelly turned about, and resolved to follow it. She must run fast to keep up with the bounding footsteps of her little guide; but

fear gave her wings. The lamb did not stop until it reached a fold where all the flock were sheltered, and then Nelly looked about and knew her own home surroundings. O such a glad little girl as she was as she bounded up the steps, and rushed to her mother's arms, and was folded to her anxious heart!

“The dear lamb was her guide, and brought her safely home.

“Remember the Lamb that was slain, children, to bring you safe home to the heavenly fold. But if you do not follow that guide, all he has done will not avail you. Are you following in his footsteps? Are you drawing nearer to his heavenly home?”

And if you feel that the Blessed Shepherd is with you, wander no longer, poor, lone, sinning one; but with lowly heart

and penitent tears give thyself into the hands of the Savior of sinners. Then wilt thou sing with earnestness and tears the beautiful lines:

I was a wandering sheep,
I did not love the fold,
I did not love my Savior's voice,
I would not be controll'd;
I was a wayward child,
I did not love my home,
I did not love my Father's voice,
I loved afar to roam.

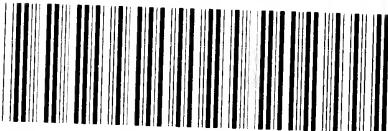
The Shepherd sought his sheep,
The Father sought his child;
They followed me o'er vale and hill,
O'er deserts, waste and wild;
They found me nigh to death,
Famished and faint and lone;
They bound me with the bands of love,
They saved the wandering one.

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